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THE CHAPLAIN AS PREACHER, TEACHER AND COUNSELOR

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INTRODUCTION

The Christopher movement in the United States works to encourage each individual to show a personal and practical responsibility in restoring the love and truth of Christ to the marketplace, in positive, constructive action. It's motto, which has earned a great deal of comment, is that it is "Better to light one candle than to curse the darkness."

Curiously enough, Mao Tse-Tung also knew the value of this theme. When he wrote a letter to a comrade to criticize a pessimistic view existing in the party in 1930, he stressed a Chinese proverb which was used to title the letter: A single spark can start a prairie fire. He was speaking of small forces, often almost surrounded and isolated from the main effort, when he remarked:

> "the force that remains is to all appearances very small and this naturally makes comrades (who judge by appearances) feel pessimistic. But the matter is quite different, if we look into the essence. Here the old Chinese proverb, 'A single spark can start a prairie fire,' is applicable. In other words, although the force is only a small one at present, it will rapidly develop."[1]

Here is the same theme discussed on opposite sides of the

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[1]Mao Tse-Tung, Selected Works, 6 vols. (New York: International Press, 1970), p.73.

argument between Communism and the West. One, expressed by the Christophers and, in essence, any Army Chaplain, speaks in terms of the spiritual and inspirational motive. The other, as used by the Communists, employs a typically destructive simile, consistent with the Communist intent upon terror. Yet each recognizes the importance of the individual and his motivation, as well as his ability to motivate others, in the role of armed forces and guerrilla warfare.

Mission of the Army Chaplain

The Army Chaplain's mission is to support and encourage the religious faith which is a vital part of the life of the American soldier.[2] The mission of the U.S. Army is, in a hot war of today's caliber, to organize guerrilla forces and support conventional planning and military operations.[3] In a cold war, the Army trains military personnel to combat guerrilla and terrorist activities and works to strengthen the defense capabilities of people under pressure. In either case, the soldier of the U.S. Army is expected to reach a tough, well-trained

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[2]U.S. Army Field Manual 16-5, The Chaplain, p. 12.

[3]U.S. Army Field Manual 27-10, The Laws of Land Warfare, p.32.

and extremely versatile condition. His confidence, assurance and moral determination play an important part in the effectiveness of his operation, and the support which he can receive from his chaplain, as well as from the other elements of a balanced command, contributes to his success. In brief, the mission of the Chaplain's Corps blends with the mission of the U.S. Army, and provides an active role for the Chaplain in either hot or cold war.

Duties of the Army Chaplain

Among the general duties of a chaplain, three are customarily cited.[4] He arranges for and conducts public worship. He gives spiritual guidance and moral counsel. He builds character and promotes good morale. The Chaplain represents in the military establishment, the religious motive for right thinking and right acting. Each of these goals demands an individual who is spiritually and professionally well qualified, but who is also trained physically and militarily to share the problems of the men. As U.S. Army soldiers approach combat, they would normally display a deeper interest in religion and a more serious concern with the spiritual aspects of life, as has been evidenced by soldiers in all wars. I personally observed this while spending

[4] The Chaplain, p. 27.

a year with the 25th Infantry Division in Vietnam (1968-1969). I am deeply convinced that pastoral advice be available to him, and a soldier's respect is greater for those who have shared his difficult training and understand his special skills.

These special skills may send a soldier far from the ordinary camp and many miles from his advanced base. Each mile that he is separated from his comrades places a heavier burden upon the soldier. He has greater latitude, and, within the resources he commands, more freedom from discipline while engaged in his mission. This is an essential reason for the rigorous screening which should be undertaken by aspirants for the U.S. Military Forces. The malcontent, the drugger, the drop-out, the griper and the man who cannot "cut the mustard" should be eliminated. But no training can simulate adequately the rigorous and intensive demands of combat, and the support which he recieves from his organization has to recognize the need to provide moral and intellectual cords to the strength of his well-being.

Preacher

The Army Chaplain must speak to the Army not for the Army. In these troubled times when both preaching and the Church seem to be under a cloud, it is well to remember I think that our ancestors, the apostolic preachers, apologists, and martyrs,

were a pillar of fire by night (sometimes quite literally) in the darkness of that troubled time. They paid a price for the privilege of being God's spokesman. Our opportunities as Army Chaplains and challenges are as great as theirs, and our persecutions are as nothing in comparison.

Preaching today is in a crisis, it faces the danger of being taken captive by the cultural situation, which is itself in crisis. The cultural crisis, which is the contemporary setting for preaching seems to swirl around two familiar poles: the situation of man as a person and the situation of man in society. Secular messiahs bid for the soul of man with gospels related to one or the other of these two poles. Since the time of Sigmund Freud the secular order has produced a massive movement called psychotherapy as the answer to man's personal predicament, and since the time of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels the secular order has produced a world-wide revolutionary movement called Communism, which is a totalitarian socio-religious movement with atheistic orientation offered as the answer to man's socio-economic predicament. The Church has not yet assimilated the impact of these two upheavals, I think we are in the process of doing so. A crisis is a time both of opportunity and of danger.

If we are to confront and engage our troops our people today as Army Chaplains where they live—where they think,

worry, lie, cheat, steal, love, dream and work—we ought to speak to them using the concrete images of the world at hand. Then we will be using this time of crisis as an opportunity for preaching the Good News which we must not only believe in ourselves but try to live. Living what we are preaching is of course our best sermon. Our preaching must have in it the medicine which this age, or any age needs.

Teacher

The Human Self-Development Program (formerly called Character Guidance and then called Our Moral Heritage) is an opportunity provided by the Army to give its personnel a chance to step out of the hectic pace of the day. It is a flexible program which provides time to explore and to discuss with others the vital issues of life affecting each person's freedom as an individual in a group, and his pursuit of happiness as he strives to be a responsible, mature person in the community.

The program is ultimately the responsibility of the Command. Key staff members—usually overworked already—need to believe in the priority of this program if it is ever going to be effective. A chaplain may delude himself into thinking that he is the only authority who can operate the program. In some areas such a view may be appropriate, while in others it would

be disastrous.

I believe that only the chaplain who is an equal among equals, not only in education, but in day-to-day functioning, will be valued and respected as he shares in the pulse and pace of the Command.

Furthermore, vital issues in the Command can be monitored, such as racism, women's rights (WAC'S) drug usage, and standards of conduct.

Many dedicated commanders are concerned with the development within their units of healthy attitudes and strong values. In the past, some commanders attempted to mold these attitudes and values by placing the "fear of the Lord" into the troops along the lines of the stereotype of leadership explicit in such films as "Patton." Today we realize I hope that the application of raw power is not pedagogically sound; it simply doesn't work. Ideas or attitudes induced by fear lose their effect in the complexities of present-day life. Genuine human relationships that are useful in influencing others require a personal investment in "one to one" relationships or in small group contacts. To transmit real concern throughout a Command, the commander must do far more than simply arrange to be seen walking among his troops in the battalion area. He needs the help of his entire staff, beginning with the chaplain. It is ridiculous to

believe that the commander alone can be an effective sounding board for several hundred soldiers.

One of the things a chaplain can do to implement this program is to teach a class on Family Problems. The type of class he could give would be a conference and seminar. Who, indeed, will follow if we do not lead? A lesson plan is included in the Appendix.

Counselor

Counseling for chaplains consists mainly in dealing with military personnel and their families in the interpersonal relationship of interviews. At the very outset, it should be stated that many chaplains are limited as to the methods, the intensity, and results of counseling. Unless the chaplain has a recognized degree in medicine, psychology or psychiatry, he should not attempt the more professional types of "in depth-therapy," such as psychoanalysis and intensive psychotherapy. Manipulation of the counselee's unconscious emotions through dream analysis, free association therapy, prescription of drugs or medicine, hypnosis or similar highly technical procedures, should be referred to professionally competent authorities, and not dealt with by chaplains.[5]

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[5]D.A. Pamphlet 16-60, The Chaplain as Counselor, p. 5.

In the main, chaplains may properly counsel in matters concerning conscious material and leave the sifting and the interpretation of unconscious data and processes to psychiatrists. It is natural that unconscious factors may be revealed during any period of counseling. If these are important, the chaplain must recognize them; if they need treatment, he must learn how and when to refer them properly for professional help.[6]

When Army psychiatrists and others in allied or interested professions feel the Army chaplain is competent to counsel soldiers or their families who suffer minor maladjustments, they will be generous with their own referrals to the chaplain. This is an honored recognition of the chaplain's competency, interest and efficiency as a good counselor and as an important member of the team.

Counseling, because it leans more to the arts than the sciences, although depending on the sciences, is the application of native and acquired talents to the interpersonal relationship in interview sessions, for the purpose of mental relief and acceptable solutions to personal problems. To understand the implications of the interpersonal relationships and its

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[6]U.S. Army Chaplain's School, Fort Hamilton, N.Y., Referral Agencies, p. 31.

therapeutic value, one should have a fairly well-rounded knowledge and appreciation of psychological principles.[7]

Psychology is the study of human behavior and conduct. Studies of heredity and environment which affect the personality of the soldier and his family are a basic necessity. Discussions about human reactions, defense mechanisms, motivation and problems of adjustment serve as the counselor's needed tools when dealing with human frustrations and conflicts. Likewise, recognition of various types of mental maladjustment, such as the neurosis, the psychosis and character disorders, will aid chaplains in recommending expeditious and adequate referral.

The Army chaplain, furthermore, faces special problem areas not always peculiar to military life, but constituting specific difficulties in the adjustment to military life. Such topics as racial and religious discrimination, alcoholism, drug addiction, brainwashing, and combat exhaustion furnish many cases, where not only medical treatment is indicated, but counseling by competent interviewers is recommended. To avoid a study of these subjects limits the chaplain's effectiveness as a counselor and overburdens medical, psychiatric, legal and personnel officers.

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[7] The Chaplain as Counselor, p. 17.

Lack of training, defects of personality and his attitude toward counseling will weigh heavily in determining his counseling usefulness. Most chaplains can become efficient counselors, if they have (1) a love for people; (2) a desire to help them; (3) a knowledge of their own capabilities and liabilities; (4) and technical awareness of the dynamics and treatment needed in the counseling relationship.

The chaplain's counseling activities are limited only by his mission. First of all, he is expected to assist military personnel and be concerned with their interests. Secondly, families and relatives of military personnel may call on him for advice in their problems. While it may be laudible and sometimes necessary to counsel those outside the military life, a chaplain's first duty and one which takes precedence over others, the way I see it, is to the officer, soldier and his family. Survivors of deceased military personnel will need his guidance, understanding, empathy, and sympathy. Civilians having business or relationships with military personnel may call for similar guidance and direction. His tact, prudence and understanding will furnish the proper referral with the minimum of embarrassment. In this type of counseling, he is always conscious of his duty to help worthy people find satisfactory answers, but he must be alert to see that the unscrupulous or

the misinformed do not find evidence in his advice for the filing of claims or action against the government.

Academic interest and reading in the counseling field will only give intellectual clues to areas which need to be watched and analyzed. It will not necessarily bring proficiency. Like surgeons who spend a year or more in their internship, so chaplains or others interested in counseling need supervision in actual counseling sessions. Development of effective techniques, better knowledge of self, recognition of defects and resources of the counselor's personality are traits that can be acquired only through systematically and intelligently supervised case work.

Summary and Conclusions

The young soldier of today in the U.S. Army is independent and somewhat self-reliant. He has discontent but he will always be discontent at this point in his life. He is adamant and makes his feelings known. He likes to solve his own problems. The image of the Chaplain as a preacher, teacher and counselor needs to be sharpened so that the Chaplain is identified as a person who can help to solve intimate, spiritual problems that are not ordinarily brought to light through the chain of command.

When teaching Human Self-Development classes, the Chaplain must have something to say and really attempt to rap with and

identify with the young soldiers. The Chaplain must be a good listerner and he must be attentive to the needs of the soldier. Those that come to the Chaplain for counseling come because of trust and because of the value system that he represents.

The Chaplain is most often identified as a man of God, but frequently his rank and his military affiliation cause a strain in the interpersonal relationship between Chaplain and soldier. The Chaplain must work hard to identify himself as both representative of the military and of his religious denomination. He is a minister, priest or rabbi in uniform. As an officer, he can use the weight of his office and rank to be of greater help in both military and spiritual matters, or on the other hand, he can become an officer first, then a Chaplain. The day that I start acting more like an officer than a Chaplain is the day that I had better get out of the Army. Right now I still believe that the role of the Army Chaplain as Chaplain is essential in the support of the present-day Army.

The Chaplain As Teacher

LESSON PLAN

INSTRUCTIONAL UNIT: FAMILY PROBLEMS - HUMAN SELF DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVES: A. TO INDICATE HOW, WHEN, AND WHERE TO REFER PERSONS WITH FAMILY PROBLEMS

B. TO INDICATE STEPS JUNIOR LEADERS CAN TAKE TO PREVENT AND HELP SOLVE FAMILY PROBLEMS

C. TO PROVIDE SEMINAR DISCUSSION OF A AND B

TYPE: CONFERENCE AND SEMINAR

TIME ALLOTTED: 50 MINUTE PRESENTATION TO: PLATOON LEADERS AND SERGEANTS

TOOLS, EQUIPMENT, AND MATERIALS: NONE

PERSONNEL: ONE CHAPLAIN INSTRUCTOR

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS: CHALKBOARD WITH CHALK AND ERASER

REFERENCES: NONE

STUDY ASSIGNMENT: NONE

1. INTRODUCTION (2 minutes):

   a. U.S. divorce rate hovers between 1 in 3 and 1 in 4 rate.

   b. Increased strains of service life: turbulence, financial, separations, etc.

   c. The importance of the home and family for the married and single soldier's happiness and stability.

2. EXPLANATION (10 minutes):

   a. Referral agencies:

      (1) Lawyer. Only as a last resort in marital discord when the marriage is to be dissolved. Refer for all other legal problems such as tax, residence requirements, adoption, etc.

(2) Psychiatrist. Abnormal behavior such as suicide threats, extreme hostility, homosexuality, and serious maladjustment.

(3) Doctor. Health Problems.

(4) Social worker. Husband-wife adjustment problems, relationship to children, role difficulties.

(5) Chaplain. Religious-moral problems and marital tensions, difficulties at home.

(6) American Red Cross. Emergency leave, home studies, grants, loans (AER also)

b. What Can You Do?

(1) Refer family problems when person(s) is (are) willing and when you feel you are "over your head." If in doubt as to where, refer to mental hygiene clinic or chaplain who will get person(s) to professional help needed.

(2) Listen with interest and concern. If they have chosen you to talk to, it is probably because they feel free to talk to you. Let them "ventilate."

(3) Be non-judgmental. Don't react with unhelpful moralisms ("But how could you do such a thing?"). You may not approve of the behavior but most likely the person does not either. He(She) is already condemming himself(herself) or hating himself(herself). Don't add to it. Accept the person as having a problem and get to what can be done about it.

(4) Don't project your own problems and experiences into the situation. Listen carefully to the whole story before you jump to conclusions.

(5) Remember "feelings are facts." A person may feel differently than what the real facts are. Feelings run deep and often are not changed by reason. The question is <u>why</u> the person feels as he does.

(6) Strive for self-insight in the person rather than the giving of "good advice" from the "outside." If you do give advice, check out with "experts."

(7) When a person discovers a constructive way of coping with a problem, give support. Often a person looks for emotional support and courage to do what should be done.

(8) Attempt to discern problems at an early stage before they become unmanageable.

c. Seminar problems (36 minutes)

Family problems:

I. Single soldiers:

1. No mail
2. Financial problems at home
3. Sickness at home
4. Parents about to divorce
5. Parent missing

II. Married Soldier:

1. Marriage vocation - not avocation
2. Financial problems - credit buying
3. Drinking
4. In-law problems
5. Jealousy - suspicious
6. Listening to gossip
7. Arguing - fighting
8. Bringing up children
9. Talking over problems

3. SUMMARY (2 minutes):

Platoon leaders and sergeants can help in alleviating family problems through wise and timely referral as well as openness in listening to those who share these problems. Some basic understanding of counseling principles may be helpful when a person is reluctant to seek professional help.

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